

17 December 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

DDA REGISTRY
FILE: Commo

FROM: Clifford D. May, Jr.
Associate Deputy Director for Administration

SUBJECT: Handling CRITIC Messages

1. During the DCI Staff Meeting on 12 December there was a discussion regarding alleged delays in receiving CRITIC messages in the Agency. The question was raised because during the SCC meeting on 12 December General Jones had available CRITIC-type information from [] which was not yet available to you.

2. I have talked to Dick Kerr, Director, Office of Current Operations, and consulted with the COMMO people to determine what the problem might have been. I have determined that the first of the two CRITIC messages from [] was filed by the SSO in [] Washington time. It arrived in CIA (and probably in the White House Situation Room) [] It is possible that the White House communicator handed a copy to General Jones (because it was filed by the SSO) immediately before the SCC meeting which started at [] It is also possible that General Jones may have been directly in touch with the situation in [] via DOD command channels before coming to the SCC meeting. The CRITIC from the CIA Station in [] was filed at [] Washington time and arrived in CIA at [] after the SCC meeting had started.

3. With regard to the procedures for handling CRITIC messages, CRITIC messages originated by any U.S. Government Agency are all handled alike in the NSA-managed CRITICOM system. All CRITICS are addressed to NSA where, upon receipt, they are automatically retransmitted to other agencies. Upon receipt of a CRITIC message in the CIA Headquarters Signal Center, it is automatically sent to the Operations Center as well as to the Cable Secretariat. The Operations Center is responsible for getting the message to the DCI. The Cable Secretariat is responsible for distribution to other Agency components. The target is to deliver the message to the addressees within [] of the filing time.

4. With regard to the two CRITICS filed from [] they both arrived in the CIA Operations Center within [] of the filing time. While this did not meet the target, there does not appear to be a problem with the CRITICOM system or any need to file CRITIC messages in a parallel command channel as was suggested during the 12 December staff meeting.

Distribution:

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(s) C. D. May

Clifford D. May, Jr.

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